

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 and 11-21 are presently pending in the application. By this Amendment, independent claims 1 and 17 have been amended. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The Examiner has rejected the claims under 35 U.S.C. §103, citing Shennib (US 6,914,994) and Hou (US 6,711,271). The Examiner combines these references with the Shulz reference (US 6,516,073) in rejecting dependent claims 7, 9, 12 and 20.

While the references cited by the Examiner (e.g. Hou) appear to disclose switching from normal mode to sleep mode, the references do not make use of the sleep mode as the Applicants' invention does.

In Applicants' invention, the controller multiplexes the processor between a power-saving state and a sound-processing state. It further multiplexes the power-saving state into a first portion, in which power to the processor is reduced, and a second portion, in which power to the processor is maintained to allow the processor to perform tasks that differ from those performed in the sound-processing state. See Applicants' Specification at paragraphs 17-20, for example. The sophisticated use of multiplexing allows the power-saving state to be much more fully utilized than the references of record will permit.

Accordingly, to more fully distinguish the Applicants' invention from the references, claim 1 has been amended to recite that the controller multiplexes the processor between a power-saving state and a sound-processing state and further multiplexes the power-saving state into a first portion in which power to the processor is reduced and a second portion in which the power to the processor is maintained, to

allow the processor to perform tasks that differ from those performed in the sound processing state.

Independent claim 17 has been amended to recite the steps of:

entering a power-saving state if the magnitude is less than the threshold for a first period;

entering a sound-processing state if the magnitude is greater than or equal to the threshold; and

while in the power-saving state, reducing power to one or more modules residing on the digital hearing aid during one portion of the power-saving state, and performing processing tasks other than tasks performed while in the sound-processing state during another portion of the power-saving state.

It is respectfully submitted that these amendments now render the claims allowable over all references of record.

Regarding the Examiner's objections to claims 9 and 10, these claims have been cancelled.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in a condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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